

# Employment First Committee

DRAFT Meeting Minutes of February 5, 2013  
Sacramento, California

---

## Members Present

Tony Anderson  
Lisa Cooley  
Denyse Curtright  
Chris Foisy for Dennis Petrie  
Kathleen Derby  
Sharon Galloway for Robin Hansen  
Connie Lapin  
Bill Moore  
Andrew Mudryk  
David Mulvey  
Kecia Weller, Chairperson  
Amy Westling  
Barbara Wheeler  
Cindy White

## Members Absent

Daniel Boomer  
Rachel Chen  
Dale Dutton  
Olivia Raynor  
Debbie Sarmento  
Rachel Steward  
Robert Taylor

## Others Present

Michael Brett, Staff  
Marissa Clark  
Eric Glunt  
Sharon Hanson  
Mark Polit, Staff  
Mary Agnes Nolan, Staff  
Sam Seaton, Pride Industries  
Ruby Villanueva, Staff  
Edward White

---

## Call to Order

Kecia Weller, Chairperson, called the meeting to order at 10:34pm

## Welcome and Introductions

Kecia Weller shared her excitement to be chairing the Employment First Committee. Those attending in person introduced themselves.

## Quorum

A quorum was established

## Approval of Minutes of December 18, 2012

Motion was carried to approve minutes without modifications

---

**MOTION TO ACCEPT:** Lisa Cooley **SECONDED:** Bill Moore **APPROVE:** 12 **OPPOSE:** 0 **ABSTAIN:** 2 (Connie Lapin, Barbara Wheeler)

---

## Public Comments

No public comments were presented

## Proposal – Self-Advocate Interviews

**Kecia Weller** presented information on the *Self-Advocacy Team Data Collection Project* intended to interview 400 self advocates, between the ages of 18-30 years old. The interviews would determine their interest regarding integrated competitive employment (ICE) and get first hand information about their experience with employment and seeking employment. There will be four (4) self advocate leaders on the team conducting these interviews: **Cindy White, Lisa Cooley, Robert Taylor and Kecia Weller**. The team asked for input and recommendations from the Employment First Committee.

**Barbara Wheeler** expressed her gratification that such an endeavor is being attempted and shared the importance of the team **clearly identifying its focus** and knowing exactly what **data they are attempting to capture**. She suggested that **quantitative data** is available from other sources, but the self-advocates are in a unique position to gather **qualitative data**, such as stories and perception. Ensuring the **integrity of the data collection process** should be a priority, while understanding that it is from the analysis of the discussion that you obtain valuable information.

Barbara made the following suggestions:

- Due to the size of the sample group intended on being interviewed and the time and commitment that would be required by the team leaders, interview people in small 10 person focus groups.
- Understand how you are going to identify people being interviewed
- Record interviews (takes time to analyze data and themes, but recording the interviews will make certain all comments are considered).
- Make some of your questions open ended
- Use terms that are easily understood (ex, ask “how much do you get paid”, instead of “do you make more than minimum wage”)
- Interviewees may not be able to provide certain information immediately, so find a way to get the information after the focus group has met.

**Bill Moore** added the need to understand the intended outcome of the interviews and asked how the information is to be used, so that the findings are related specifically to the work of the EFC.

**Sharon Galloway** expressed the need to focus questions on barriers and transition issues as it is important to know what is preventing people from obtaining or even seeking employment. That way the analysis could identify common themes. Asking about pre-vocational training is recommended.

**Connie Lapin** shared concern about using the term pre-vocational as it means different things to different people. Instead she suggested asking, “What helped you get ready for work experience?” Connie also suggested that questions about transition are important. Connie is willing to help get families on board with this data collection process.

**Denyse Curtright** offered to provide demographic data (by ethnicity, disability, residence type, etc.) on working RC consumers.

*Finally, the EFC agreed that collecting compelling stories from self-advocates is a meaningful undertaking that can support the EFC's work, affect policymakers, and help drive change. Additionally, the interview/focus group process can identify trends in barriers to employment that can inform the EFC's work. Kecia will work with Olivia Raynor from the Tarjan Center, University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities (UCEDD), UCLA. They will work to revise questions and plan how to collect the data. Kecia will bring that plan back to the Self-Advocates and Mary Agnes Nolan and other Council staff to make more plans on how to do interviews and analyze the stories people tell.*

#### **Presentation of the Final 2012 Employment First Committee Annual Report**

**Mark Polit** presented the final 2012 EFC Report. The report was modified per the suggestions made at the last EFC meeting on December 18, 2012. The full Council approved the EFC report on January 16, 2013 and was subsequently submitted to the Governor's Office.

#### **EFC Strategic Planning Process**

**Mark Polit** facilitated the Strategic Planning Process. He reviewed the legislative history of the EFC and its statutory responsibilities. He presented the "cheat sheet" that listed statutory responsibilities and the commitments the EFC made for further work in the 2012 Employment First Report. He reviewed with the EFC their 2012 priorities:

The priorities of the EFC are:

1. Prioritize the enactment of an Employment First Policy
2. Strengthen youth transition to integrated complete employment.

Cross Cutting Priorities of the Employment First Committee are:

1. Participation by traditionally under-represented groups
2. Increase expectations for work (early childhood through working age)
3. Interagency collaboration

**Barbara Wheeler** made a motion to take the #1 crosscutting priority (Participation by traditionally under-represented groups) and move it so it becomes a third priority of the EFC. This motion was carried.

---

**MOTION TO ACCEPT:** Barbara Wheeler

**SECONDED:** Andy Mudryk

**APPROVE:** 14

**OPPOSE:** 0

---

The EFC listed the groups the Committee and its members collaborate with to understand how our work relates and that we do not duplicate efforts. Cindy commented that this showing us our "family tree":

- California Employment Consortium for Youth (CECY)
- Statewide Self-Advocacy Network (SSAN)
- California Committee on the Employment of People with Disabilities (CCEPD)
- Community of Practice (California Department of Education and Department of Rehabilitation)
- CA Coalition for Persons in Secondary Education
- Southern California APSE
- Colleges to Career
- Department of Labor Office of Disability Employment Policy
- US Office of Special Education Programs
- The Arc of the United States
- National Growers Association.

### **The EFC made the following decisions for its work in 2013:**

- The major area of focus for 2013 is helping people with developmental disabilities and their families (including people in under-represented groups) understand the relationship between work and public benefits. (This responds to the barrier that many people with developmental disabilities do not look for work because they are afraid to lose their public benefits). The EFC will:
  - Invite Bryon MacDonald from the World Institute on Disability and Eric Glunt from the California Health Incentives Improvement Project (CHHIP) to give an overview of state and federal work incentives and present on potential public benefit policy changes.
  - Make recommendations for state or federal public benefit policy changes to better enable people receiving public benefits to work. Explore possible impact of the ABLE Act and the idea of a “get out of jail free card”, to try to minimize the risk of losing benefits through paperwork errors.
  - Tony Anderson from the Arc of California will check with the Supported Life Institute to see if we can have a session at the Supported Life Conference on public benefits and work.
  - Tony Anderson will check with the College of Direct Support and Essential Learning to see if they have coursework on public benefits and work.
  - The MIND Institute Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities holds an annual event in October for National Disability Employment Awareness Month, which includes information on the relationship of work and public benefits.
  - Amy Westling from the Association of Regional Center Agencies will check with regional centers on what training materials they may have on the subject of work and public benefits.
  - Further discussion on EFC activities will take place at the May meeting.
- The other main area of focus will be education of employers. The EFC will plan how to address this focus area at the May meeting.

- Additionally, the EFC seeks information from the following and discuss implications for further work:
  - Denyse Curtright from DDS will present data from the CDER on employment status compared to ethnicity, age and other factors.
  - A vendors' perspectives panel on how to improve Supported Employment.
  - At the May EFC meeting, plan for a panel from selected Special Education Local Planning Areas and the California Department of Education. The panel would address best practices on how students need to be supported, what needs to happen, before they transition from K-12 education to work or post-secondary education.

### **Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned by Chairperson Kecia Weller at 3:30pm